

1980

## **A Study to Determine the Acceptance by Potential Employers of a Cooperative Education Program for Gifted and Talented Students in Newport News Public Schools**

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A STUDY TO DETERMINE THE ACCEPTANCE BY POTENTIAL EMPLOYERS  
OF A COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM  
FOR GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS  
IN NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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A PROJECT  
PRESENTED TO  
DR. JOHN RITZ  
OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

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IN FULFILLMENT  
OF THE COURSE REQUIREMENTS  
OF EDUCATION 636

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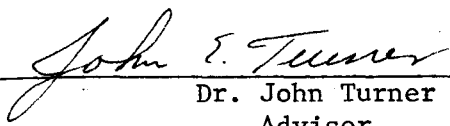
By  
Deborah Smith Buchanan

August, 1980

This project was prepared by Deborah Smith Buchanan under the direction of the professor in Education 636, Problems in Education, as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Secondary Education and has been approved by the Graduate Program Director of Vocational and Industrial Arts Education.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research paper was prepared under the direction of Dr. John Turner, Professor of Education, Old Dominion University. The author extends her appreciation to Dr. Turner for his assistance in the preparation of this paper.

Appreciation is also extended to Dr. John Ritz, Professor of Education, Old Dominion University, for his guidance and professional assistance.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Gifted and talented students comprise from three to five percent of the school population. The fact that these students usually possess many potentialities and varied interests can complicate their selection of a career. Typically the gifted and talented person can succeed in many areas, and typically he or she will show interest in a wide variety of subjects. Vocational education can provide a focus for these career interests by offering intensified occupational experience for gifted and talented students at the high school level.

### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

A cooperative program could provide on-the-job experience for identified gifted and talented students in the professions or skill areas of their choice. As described in the 1980-81 Annual Program Plan for Vocational Education in Newport News, a program of this type has been proposed for Fall, 1980 (Newport News Public Schools, 1980, Schedule 6). The problem of this study was to determine the acceptance, by potential employers, of a cooperative education program for gifted and talented students in Newport News Public Schools.

### RESEARCH GOALS

In order to plan for this proposed cooperative program, it was necessary to gain specific information from the business community on the Peninsula. The goals of this study were:



1. To determine the job placements for gifted and talented students that would be available on the Peninsula.

2. To determine the variety of occupational areas that would provide assistance to the program.

3. To determine the job-entry skills that prospective employers would require of a student in the program.

#### BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The Constitution of Virginia provides that standards of quality shall be determined and prescribed by the Board of Education, subject to revision by the General Assembly. The Board has prescribed such standards for the 1978-80 biennium. Standard four is concerned with education for gifted and talented students and states:

Each school division shall provide differentiated instruction to increase educational challenges to enrich the experiences and opportunities available to gifted and talented students (State Department of Education, 1978, p. 3).

In response to the Standards of Quality, the Newport News Public School Division has identified the need to equalize educational choices for groups of students who have not been adequately served in regular school programs. Secondary students with outstanding ability and the capabilities of high academic performance fall in this category and will be given the opportunity to enroll in a gifted and talented cooperative program. The following program description and objectives were included in the Annual Program Plan:

Fifteen eleventh and twelfth grade students enrolled in the Point Option program who evidence unique talents and abilities will be identified for the project.

The coordinator of the project will find positions suitable to the student's interest and skills. A mentor-type arrangement will be made with each employer who is willing to offer his/her time helping the student to gain a marketable skill. Each student will earn two credits in the project; one for his/her attendance in an in-school seminar conducted by the coordinator and one for on-the-job experience. A minimum of two hundred and fifty clock hours per year of job experience will be required.

The objectives of the Newport News program will be:

1. To make students aware of the various vocational and career opportunities available to them.
2. To develop personal traits for good citizenship and work success.
3. To provide effective skill training for future full time careers.
4. To provide opportunities for supervised work experience.
5. To provide enrichment opportunities to further develop students' abilities.
6. To make students aware of career options in relation to their interest and abilities. (Newport News Public Schools, 1980, Schedule 6)

The success of this program will depend greatly upon the cooperation of the potential employers in the community and the availability of job placements. This study was designed to provide information to Newport News Public Schools that will aid in the implementation of the program.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

There were three major assumptions upon which this study was based:

1. The Gifted and Talented Cooperative Program would be implemented in Fall, 1980.

2. Employers on the Peninsula would be interested in participating in the program.

3. A number of identified gifted and talented students would be interested in participating in the program.

#### LIMITATIONS

This study was limited in scope to employers on the Peninsula and to employers in specific occupational categories. Information from the United States Office of Education indicated that gifted and talented students usually excel in specific job categories. This study was limited, in part, to these categories: (1) Architecture, (2) Computer Science, (3) Journalism, and (4) Marine Biology (U.S.O.E., 1978, p. 158). Additional categories used were taken from the gifted and talented course proposal for Newport News Public Schools and included: (1) Business Management, (2) Engineering, (3) Finance, (4) Graphics, (5) Legal Research, (6) Medicine, (7) Research Science, and (8) Television Production (1980, Schedule 6).

Student enrollment in the proposed gifted and talented program will be limited to those who attend Point Option in the Newport News Public School System (see definition).

#### PROCEDURES

Employers to be surveyed were identified by using the membership roster of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. Members were screened and classified into the job categories that are of particular interest to

gifted and talented students. To complete the study, a mail survey was sent to the identified employers.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Cooperative Program - A program that coordinates classroom instruction with on-the-job training. Regularly scheduled part-time employment gives students an opportunity to experience theory in practice while developing competencies through training on a job related to their career goal.

Differentiated Education - Learning experiences which cannot be duplicated in the regular program.

Gifted and Talented -

Those children identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society (Taulbee, 1980, p. 20).

Mentor - A knowledgeable and experienced person in the gifted and talented student's field of interest who provides the student with counsel, guidance, opportunities to observe, and assists in career goals (Stone, 1976, p. 40).

Point Option - An alternative school in the Newport News Public School System designed to meet the needs of capable senior high school students who are not functioning up to their potential in the traditional school setting. Point Option uses the life and resources of the community as its core.

Program - A course or planned sequence of courses, services or other educational activities designed to meet specific vocational objectives so that individuals are prepared to enter an occupation or closely related group of occupations (Virginia Department of Education, 1979, p. 4).

#### OVERVIEW OF CHAPTER

Newport News Public Schools will offer a Gifted and Talented Cooperative Program in the Fall of 1980. The purpose of this study was to collect pertinent information from employers on the Peninsula that will assist the coordinator of the new program. The purpose of Chapter I was to provide a detailed introduction of the problem which included: (1) the research goals, (2) the assumptions of the researcher, (3) the limitations of the study, (4) the procedures for completion of the study, and (5) the definitions of terms. In Chapter II, a review of the literature pertaining to the problem will be presented. The methods and procedures used for conducting the study will be described in Chapter III. In Chapter IV, the findings of the study will be presented. Chapter V contains the summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter contains a review of literature as it relates to the education of gifted and talented students. It includes an overview of research that has been conducted with the gifted and talented and descriptions of this type of student. Various methods of student identification are presented. Also included are the characteristics that a gifted and talented program should have, as well as descriptions of existing programs. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the cooperative method in vocational education.

### STUDIES OF GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENTS

The identification of gifted and talented students has been extremely difficult. Studies began with the work of Sir Francis Galton in the latter years of the nineteenth century. Information from this research furnished a comprehensive description of the traits of gifted children and information about the origins and development of genius. (Encyclopedia of Education, 1971, p. 140)

A full-time longitudinal study of gifted individuals from earliest childhood to maturity was conducted by Lewis Terman and M. H. Ogden from 1921-1959. After 25 years, the great majority of the subjects originally selected as gifted continued to be superior in physical development, educational achievement, intellectual and personal traits. This study of the gifted eventually led to the development of the Stanford Binet test (Encyclopedia of Educaiton, 1971, p. 140). Terman's

monumental studies represent the most widely recognized and frequently quoted research on the characteristics of gifted persons.

More recent studies support the findings of Galton and Terman and have shown that gifted persons are far more task oriented and involved in their work than are people in the general population. The researchers, J. C. Nicholls and H. G. McCurdy, dealt with a variety of populations and found similar conclusions. First, academic ability showed limited relationships to creative/productive accomplishment. Second, factors relating to task commitment played an important part in the cluster of traits that characterize highly productive people (Renzulli, 1978, p. 183).

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

Twenty-seven states now make statutory provision for the education of children who are exceptional by virtue of giftedness. Pennsylvania requires the same formal individualized educational program (IEP) for the gifted that is mandated for the handicapped (Feldman, 1979, p. 662).

In recent years, the United States Office of Education has defined the gifted and talented, using a wider variety of abilities as a basis for identification. Numerous states and school districts throughout the nation have adopted this definition:

Gifted and talented children are those who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These children require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

Children capable of high performance include those who have demonstrated any of the following abilities or aptitudes, singularly or in combination: 1. general intellectual ability, 2. specific academic aptitude, 3. creative or productive thinking, 4. leadership ability, 5. visual and performing arts aptitude, 6. psychomotor ability (Renzulli, 1978, p. 181).

Joseph Renzulli, one of the foremost leaders in the field of gifted education, agrees with the definition of the Office of Education but finds certain limitations. Basically, Renzulli feels that the definition tends to be misinterpreted by educators and often misused. In many cases, the educators will discuss the six categories in the definition but continue to use a relatively high intelligence or aptitude score as a minimum requirement for entrance into a special program. Renzulli states that no single criterion should be used to identify giftedness but rather a combination of three interlocking clusters of traits. These clusters consist of above average general ability, task commitment, and creativity. The interaction of the three clusters is the necessary ingredient for creative productive performance (Renzulli, 1978, p. 182).

After reviewing the research available on the three ingredients of giftedness, Renzulli formulated the following operational definition of gifted and talented intended to help the practitioner.

Giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits--these clusters being above average general abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Gifted and talented children are those possessing or capable of developing this composite set of traits and applying them to any potentially valuable area of human performance. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs (Renzulli, 1978, p. 261).



## IDENTIFICATION OF THE GIFTED AND TALENTED

In working with the gifted and talented in Vocational Education, identification and screening of the target population is crucial. A broad definition of giftedness should be used to include experiences as well as screening devices such as intellectual, aptitude, and ability tests. There is evidence that group administered achievement and I. Q. tests will miss up to fifty percent of truly gifted and talented students (Nasca, 1979, p. 39). Therefore, alternative methods of narrowing the population to manageable groups of potentially gifted students have been sought. Many experts in the field have agreed that teacher nomination will effectively supplement standardized testing. Nasca believes it is necessary to assess every child who is likely to be missed by group testing and that the efficient teacher nomination procedure should:

1. Focus on the characteristics of under-achievers.
2. Be brief, to insure careful scrutiny of relevant characteristics of every student.
3. Avoid the duplication of characteristics normally assessed by group administered standardized tests.
4. Provide sufficient information to insure teacher attention to relevant student characteristics (1979, p. 4).

Kenneth B. Hoyt and Jean R. Hebeler support the concept of teacher identification of the gifted and talented. The teachers should be given instructions and cautions concerning the process, and should be reminded that a superior student may not necessarily meet all of the criteria. In the identification process described by Hoyt and Hebeler, teachers used the following guidelines to identify the students:

1. Uses large vocabulary easily and accurately.
2. Is effective in spoken and written communication.
3. Has a rich reading background, and shows evidence that he thinks about his reading and likes to discuss it.
4. Shows a wide range of interests, or in exceptional cases a heavy concentration in one.
5. Spends time beyond usual assignments or schedules on things that interest him.
6. Spends much time on special projects of his own.
7. Performs significantly above grade level in school subjects.
8. Usually receives good marks in school classes.
9. Tends to figure out what is wrong with an activity and shows how it could be done better.
10. Gives refreshing twists even to old ideas.
11. Show little patience with routine procedures and skills.
12. Asks penetrating questions, particularly about causes and reasons.
13. Likes to seek answers to problems and puzzles.
14. Is quick to recognize relationships. (1974, p. 87)

Schools using the above characteristics should use objective measures as well as subjective judgements of those faculty members who know the students best.

Hoyt and Hebeler report on one school system that incorporated these characteristics into their identification process. The opinions of all ninth grade teachers were taken into consideration as well as test performances. The average IQ of the students selected for gifted programs was 131, and the average percentile on the general achievement test was 95 (1974, p. 88).

An identification process that incorporates many of Hoyt and Hebeler's suggestions will be used in Newport News when the proposed gifted and talented program is implemented. The students for this program will be selected by the following criteria:

1. The Newport News Public Schools guidelines for identifying gifted and talented.
  - a. Nominations by teacher, other school personnel, or self;
  - b. Group intelligence score of 130 or above;
  - c. Group achievement test score above the 95th percentile;
  - d. Additional scores as available, STEA or individual IQ test if student has been nominated and does not meet items 2 and 3;
  - e. Pupil products in the area considered;
  - f. Review by placement committee including school personnel, director of gifted program and project director.
2. Counselor or teacher nomination.
3. Candidates for the Governor's School for the Gifted. (Newport News Public Schools, 1980, Schedule 6)

Regardless of the identification process that is used, a gifted and talented program must include provisions to reflect the entire enrollment of the school. There can be no discrimination on the basis of sex, race, or national origin. Gifted and talented students are not limited to any social or economic group. Ideally, measures of giftedness should screen students into, not out of, programs which will enhance their opportunity to benefit themselves and society. A multifaceted approach to identification of these students can aid in the accomplishment of this goal (Milne and Lindekugel, 1976, p. 4).

## CHARACTERISTICS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

Traditional patterns of school organization do not always meet the needs of the gifted. This student must be provided the challenge, opportunity, and recognition that will foster a high level of achievement. A good program for the gifted:

1. Provides flexibility to do independent work and the opportunity to develop self-discipline. Regimentation stultifies many gifted children.
2. Provides flexibility in timing. Rigid regimentation by the clock and calendar often hinders opportunities for the gifted who will need to spend more time on some tasks and will finish others in far less than the average student.
3. Is not location bound. Many of the best opportunities exist outside the walls of the school building.
4. Recognizes that a curriculum design of totally delineated courses and units does not fit the needs of the gifted who need open-ended curricula which encourage exploration and innovation (Hoback, 1980, p. 348).

The location of the program seems to be the issue of most concern to persons working with gifted education. The "school without walls" concept used in many programs uses public buildings, museums, and the like as a base for the program (Sumpter, 1979, p. 23). The community must be used as a resource so that the students will be given the opportunity to gain experience and to interact with professionals in their areas of interest. This interaction can be performed by a variety of methods. Exploratory partnerships with gifted and talented adults who live and work in the community have been tried in many areas. The talents and interests of such adults should be tapped by schools where teachers monitor the relationships in cooperation with parents. Formal

internships for gifted and talented secondary students with adults in the community at job-related sites provide a focus on occupational roles and responsibilities (Uhler, 1977, p. 285).

The mentor-student relationship has been supported by many experts in the field. Similar to the formal internship, skilled persons in the community are asked to share their interest, commitment and expertise on a one-to-one basis. It is a means of independent study, rich in possibilities for assistance in idea production and feedback, knowledge acquisition and skill development. The role of the mentor can be seen as fulfilling several functions:

1. The tutorial function which broadens the learning potential.
2. The guidance that comes from training and knowledge of one established in the field.
3. The function of communication with someone who shares common interests.
4. The encouragement and motivation functions that are often needed to make career decisions.
5. The function of serving as a success model or a frame of reference as a student searches for a life-satisfying occupation (Milne, 1976, p. 27).

The selection of mentors should be given careful consideration. The development of a mentor resource pool could be initiated based on an interest assessment of gifted and talented students in a program. The first statewide mentor directory was published recently in Arkansas and included more than 500 men and women from a wide variety of careers. Professionals in the Arkansas Mentor Directory have agreed to work on a one-to-one basis with gifted and talented high school students, providing information in their respective areas of expertise. Funding for the

directory was made possible by a grant from the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation. Southern Arkansas University endorsed the project, provided additional funds, and agreed to assure that the service would continue. (Flemister, 1980, p. 28).

#### DESCRIPTIONS OF GIFTED AND TALENTED PROGRAMS

A wide diversity of gifted and talented programs have been implemented over the past several years. Gifted and talented education is becoming more important and receiving more financial aid from the United States Office of Education. For the purposes of this study, research has been narrowed to programs dealing with secondary students and to programs that were basically community-based. Following are descriptions of a variety of gifted and talented programs that could be adapted to serve the needs of most communities.

##### No School on Wednesday

Students at the Resource Learning Center in Birmingham, Alabama participate in a work-study program on Wednesday instead of attending school. The course allows the students to gain firsthand experience in areas they plan to pursue after high school. The work-study stations are varied and may be in a doctor's office, a hospital, the zoo, a bank, or a lab. The students must serve in a business or profession at least five hours per week for a total of seventy-five hours a semester to receive school credit. The students are graded pass/fail and are asked to evaluate the work-study situation. Parents help in selecting work-studies and cooperate by providing transportation.

This work-study program, which was developed by W. J. Meadows, has been a tremendous success since its implementation in the Spring of 1973. The concept has been adopted by schools and universities throughout Alabama, frequently with Meadows' assistance. With varied skills and talents, the gifted student faces a difficult decision in selecting one career choice for a lifetime. The work-study program is one answer to this difficult problem (Sanders, 1979, p. 45).

#### Executive Intern Program

The Executive Intern Program in Hillsborough County, Florida was developed under the guidance of Dorothy Sisk in 1972. The program allows high school students to spend a full semester with a senior official in government, an educational or cultural institution, a foundation, an agency providing direct services to community residents, a private civic agency, or some other organization with broad public interest.

An executive intern is described as a high school senior capable of assuming a mature staff role in an organization. The students selected for the program demonstrated leadership and initiative in their schools and communities, and possessed special talents and skills of value to particular sponsors. Applicants to the program were referred by their high school principals and screened in an intensive interview. Qualified students were then introduced to several potential sponsors to explore various options before making commitments. Final pairing of applicants and sponsors was done by the program coordinator.

The format of the executive internship allows students to explore possible career options while helping to serve the community. The

students become aware of the decision-making processes that are behind the everyday functioning of society. The program was successful and anticipated to continue (Hoyt, 1974, p. 220).

#### Career Education Model for Gifted and Talented Students

During the 1976-77 school year a career education program was developed by the Center for Career Development and Occupational Preparation at Texas A & M University, with funding by the United States Office of Education. A total of forty-two students were selected on the basis of general intellectual ability, creative thinking ability, academic ability, specific talent ability, school success, behavioral characteristics, and past accomplishments.

This project was divided into three phases, and each phase lasted a quarter of the school year.

Phase 1: Guidance laboratory experience allowed the students, through self-investigation and evaluation, to identify tentative career interest areas. The Department of Educational Psychology at Texas A & M provided counseling facilities.

Phase 2: Mentorship laboratory experience allowed the students to participate with University mentors in professional activities such as research, writing, teaching and consultation. Students were placed in career interest areas identified during Phase 1 and were allowed a shadowing experience for two hours each day.

Phase 3: Working internship experience was provided based on information and experience during Phases 1 and 2. The students were placed in on-site work experiences under the direction of persons engaged in the career fields the students had tentatively selected (Borman, 1978, p. 74).

#### Mentor Gifted/Talented Internship Program

In September, 1977, a mentor gifted/talented internship program was instituted at West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia.



A mentor-type arrangement is made with employers who are willing to offer their time, helping students to gain a marketable skill. Each student earns two credits in the project; one for attendance in an in-school seminar conducted by the coordinator and one for on-the-job experience. The student is required to complete three hundred and sixty hours of work experience per year and is evaluated by the coordinator and job sponsor.

Students in the Springfield program are college bound and are placed on a job that will pertain to their major. They are given the opportunity to develop skills and receive training that will encourage the attainment of higher level skills. Each student's accomplishments depend on such factors as maturity, ambition, background, attitude, and motivation for joining the project (Moore, 1977).

#### Vocational Education Gifted and Talented Cooperative Program

The Newport News School Division has recognized the need to provide educational opportunities to gifted and talented students that will offer systematic methods of career exploration. Because of the array of options open to the students and of their variety of interests, career decisions are often extremely difficult. Work experience in the career area of interest to the students can provide this needed guidance. To satisfy this need, the school division will offer a gifted and talented cooperative program in the Fall of 1980. The project proposal has been modeled after the successful program at West Springfield High School, and will be conducted in a similar fashion. Fifteen students in the eleventh and twelfth grades in the Point Option program will be identified for the project. The students will possess unique talents in their

respective areas of interest and will have attained some degree of accomplishment. Each student will be required to complete two hundred and fifty clock hours of work experience per year and will receive two credits for the course. This program is a general vocational cooperative program and will not be limited to a specific industry area. The student's interests and occupational choices will determine methods of instruction and job placements.

The Newport News program is scheduled to continue for a minimum of three school years with an enrollment of fifteen students per year. An extensive evaluation system has been formulated consisting of student self-evaluation, goal determination by students and employers, formal rating sheets by employers, and an annual progress report by the coordinator. The success of the program will depend on the proper selection of students and on the abilities of the coordinator (Newport News Public Schools, 1980, Schedule 6).

#### THE COOPERATIVE METHOD

The proposed gifted and talented program in Newport News will use the cooperative method of education. The responsibilities of cooperative education are divided between the school and the community. Teacher-coordinators and employers work together to develop individualized on-the-job learning experiences to reinforce classroom learning. Training sponsors, teacher-coordinators, and students confer regularly to plan and evaluate student experiences at the training station (Virginia Department of Education, 1979, p. 29). Students receive school credit for cooperative education experience.

Cooperative education may take various forms that could be suitable for a gifted and talented program. Particular programs could require work and school attendance on alternate days, weeks, terms, semesters or other suitable time periods. Schools or programs with a limited number of students could offer cooperative education in diversified occupations and concentrate on independent study and individualized instruction. Gifted and talented programs such as these could succeed with sufficient student interest and employer cooperation (Mitchell, 1979, p. 4).

#### SUMMARY

A review of the literature that pertains to gifted and talented education has focused on several distinct points.

1. The identification of giftedness should not be limited to intelligence test scores, but by appraising a combination of factors, including task commitment and creativity.
2. Teacher identification of the gifted and talented is a valuable tool and should be used more effectively.
3. Gifted and talented programs should be challenging, flexible, and differentiated. They should not be confined to the school but should be community-based.
4. A variety of gifted and talented programs have been implemented across the nation. Many of the successful programs have taken advantage of rich community resources.
5. Career education and gifted education should be used in combination to provide career exploration opportunities for identified students.

6. Gifted and talented students can benefit from a mentor relationship with qualified employers in their areas of occupational interest.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter contains a description of the methods and procedures used to conduct a study to determine the acceptance by potential employers of a gifted and talented cooperative education program in Newport News Public Schools. The chapter includes a description of the population of the study, an explanation of the procedure for sample selection, and a description of the survey design and administration. The chapter concludes with the procedures that were used for statistical analysis.

### POPULATION

The population of the study consisted of the members of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce as listed in the 1980 Membership Directory (pp. 5-21). Using this membership of approximately 784, the author screened and classified them according to the job categories of particular interest to gifted and talented students. These categories, as listed in the limitations of the study, were: (1) Architecture, (2) Business Management, (3) Computer Science, (4) Engineering, (5) Finance, (6) Graphics, (7) Journalism, (8) Legal Research, (9) Marine Biology, (10) Medicine, (11) Research Science, and (12) Television Production. The screening process produced eighty employers on the Peninsula who were assigned to the job categories. The sample of the study was comprised of these employers and is listed in Appendix A.

## SURVEY DESIGN

The purpose of this study was to gather information from employers on the Peninsula that would be useful in the planning and implementation of a gifted and talented cooperative program. To accomplish this purpose, a mail survey was conducted (Appendix B).

The design of the survey was based on the research goals. Specific information was solicited concerning: (1) the job placements that would be available for gifted and talented students, (2) the variety of jobs and job sites that would be available, and (3) the job-entry skills that would be required for employment. The survey design consisted of closed and open-ended questions. Included on the survey was a statement of the purpose of the study and a description of the purpose of the gifted and talented program.

## SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was administered by mail and included a cover letter that described the purpose of the study (Appendix C). The recipients of the survey were supplied with a stamped envelope to encourage the return of the information. The surveys were mailed on May 14, 1980 and May 23, 1980 was designated as a deadline date for the return of the forms. A follow-up letter (Appendix D) was sent on May 28, 1980, which encouraged employers, who had not responded by the deadline date, to do so as quickly as possible.

## STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The analysis of the surveys provided information that responded to the research goals. The number of surveys returned was tabulated according to job categories, and a return rate was established. The number of employers who were willing to hire students was counted and organized as to job categories. Next, a comparison was made of the positive and negative responses pertaining to work or observations situations available for gifted and talented students. Prerequisite skills for employment that were listed by respondents were organized according to job categories and presented. Suggestions for the implementation of a gifted/talented internship program were listed. Finally, responses of employers, pertaining to experience with cooperative or work-training programs in the past, were tabulated.

## SUMMARY

The purpose of Chapter III of this study was to provide a description of the methods and procedures that were used to conduct a mail survey of employers on the Peninsula. The chapter included descriptions of: (1) the population and the sample that were used in the study, (2) the survey design, (3) the survey administration, and (4) the methods used for statistical analysis.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

This chapter contains the presentation of data that was gathered by use of a mail survey (Appendix B) of potential employers of gifted and talented students on the Peninsula. The completed surveys provided information related to the research goals of this study.

The population of this study consisted of the members of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce. The members were classified according to the twelve job categories of interest to gifted and talented students as listed in Chapter III of this study. Of the eighty employers who were identified and surveyed, thirty-five returned the survey for a return rate of 43.8%.

### ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RETURNS

Table 1 indicates the number of surveys that were mailed to potential employers in the twelve job categories and the rate of response to these surveys. The categories of Graphics and Journalism were combined because of the small number of employers and similarity of job duties in the businesses identified. The percentage of return for the individual job categories were: Architecture, 50%; Business Management, 33.3%; Computer Science, 25%; Engineering, 57%; Finance, 33.3%; Graphics and Journalism, 66.7%; Legal Research, 35.7%; Marine Biology, 33.3%; Medicine, 38.5%; Research Science, 77.8%; and Television Production, 100%.



Table 1. Summary of the return rate of surveys mailed to potential employers on the Peninsula within the twelve job categories of interest to gifted and talented students.

Job Categories	No. Surveys Mailed	No. Surveys Returned	Percent of Return
Architecture	2	1	50%
Business Management	6	2	33.3%
Computer Science	4	1	25%
Engineering	7	4	57%
Finance	18	6	33.3%
Graphics & Journalism	3	2	66.7%
Legal Research	14	5	35.7%
Marine Biology	3	1	33.3%
Medicine	13	5	38.5%
Research Science	9	7	77.8%
TV Production	1	1	100%

The responses to the 35 returned surveys have been tabulated and are included in this chapter.

#### RESPONSES TO ITEMS ON INTEREST SURVEY

Item 1: Would you consider hiring a gifted/talented student enrolled in the internship program to work for your company?

Of the thirty-five employers who responded to the survey, thirteen or 37.1% replied yes to this question and twenty-two or 62.9% replied no.

Item 2: If no, would you consider allowing a gifted/ talented student to observe an executive in your company on a scheduled basis?

Of the thirty-five responses, fifteen employers or 42.9% replied yes and twenty employers or 57.1% replied no. A total of seventeen employers gave a positive response to questions one, two or both.

A comparison of the positive and negative responses to questions one and two of the thirty-five returned surveys is presented in Table 2. Positive responses were recorded for the following job categories: Architecture, 100%; Engineering, 75%; Finance, 33.3%; Graphics and Journalism, 100%; Legal Research, 40%; Marine Biology, 100%; Medicine, 80%; and Research Science, 28.6%. Negative responses for the job categories included: Business Management, 100%; Computer Science, 100%; Engineering, 25%; Finance, 66.7%; Legal Research, 60%; Medicine, 20%; Research Science, 71.4%; and Television Production, 100%.

Item 3: Please check the category(ies) in which employment would be available in your company for this type of student.

The seventeen employers who gave a positive response to questions one, two, or both, identified specific categories of employment that would be available to gifted and talented students. The employers indicated the following numbers of positions: Architecture, 1; Business Management, 4; Computer Science, 3; Engineering, 6; Finance, 5; Graphics, 4; Journalism, 2; Legal Research, 2; Marine Biology, 1; Medicine, 3; Research Science, 3; and Television Production, 1. A total of thirty-six positions were identified because many employers indicated several types of jobs within a general job category.

Table 2. Summary of positive and negative responses to questions one and two of the thirty-five returned interest surveys.

Job Categories	Returned Surveys	Positive Responses	Percent Positive	Negative Responses	Percent Negative
Architecture	1	1	100%	0	---
Business Management	2	0	---	2	100%
Computer Science	1	0	---	1	100%
Engineering	4	3	75%	1	25%
Finance	6	2	33.3%	4	66.7%
Graphics & Journalism	2	2	100%	0	---
Legal Research	5	2	40%	3	60%
Marine Biology	1	1	100%	0	---
Medicine	5	4	80%	1	20%
Research Science	7	2	28.6%	5	71.4%
Television Production	1	0	---	1	100%
TOTAL	35	17		18	

Item 4: Please list any prerequisite skills that you would require of a student intern participating in this program and employed by your company.

Employers in six of the twelve job categories responded to this question. The prerequisite skills required for employment have been organized according to job categories and are included on Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of prerequisite skills necessary for employment in job categories as listed by employers who responded to interest survey.

Job Categories	Skills necessary for employment
Architecture	drafting ability interest in arts mathematical aptitudes willingness to undertake wide variety of tasks
Engineering	all levels of math, including trigonometry and geometry drafting ability math/science proficiency
Finance	academic background in business world knowledge of office machine operation
Legal Research	good writing skills command of English language
Medicine	clerical ability interest in field kind, considerate, compassionate
Research Science	high grade point average career objective in line with work two years of math chemistry, physics, and biology

As indicated in Table 3, skills necessary in the field of Architecture include a drafting ability, an interest in the arts, mathematical aptitudes, and a willingness to undertake a wide variety of tasks. Employers in Engineering require a student to have experience in all levels of math, including trigonometry and geometry. A drafting and a science ability are also required in this field. An academic background in the business world would be required in Finance as well as a knowledge of the operation of office machines. In the field of Legal Research,

good writing skills and a command of the English language are necessary. Employers in Medicine require a clerical ability, an interest in the field, and an employee to be kind, considerate, and compassionate. In Research Science, a high grade point average, a career objective in science, two years of math and experience in chemistry, physics, and biology is necessary for employment. Employers in the remaining job categories who responded positively to the survey listed no prerequisite skills necessary for employment.

Item 5. Please add any comments or suggestions concerning the implementation of the Gifted/Talented Internship program.

Several respondents to the interest survey made recommendations for the implementation of the program. Comments included the following items:

- a. interest in suggested salaries.
- b. recordkeeping kept to a minimum.
- c. adhere to a definite time schedule for work or observation.
- d. schedule should include at least four hours a week for work or observation.

Item 6: Have you used any students from a cooperative or work-training program in the past?

Of the seventeen employers who gave positive responses to questions one or two, eleven or 64.7% had used students from a cooperative or work-training program in the past. Six of the employers or 35.3% had not used students in this capacity.

Of the eighteen employers who gave negative responses to both questions one and two, two or 11.1% had used a student in a cooperative or work-training program and sixteen or 88.9% had not used a student from a program of this type.

Item 6 (continued): On a scale of 1-10, with a 10 being the best, please rate your experience by choosing the one number that you feel indicates your success with the program.

The thirteen employers who had used students in cooperative or work-training programs gave a total rating of ninety-eight points. The mean score of 7.5 represents the combined scores of the thirteen respondents and indicates their opinion of their experience with the program.

Item 6 (continued): Please explain your reasons for your rating.

Employers in various job categories responded to this section of item six. Reasons given for ratings included the following comments:

- a. students' level of motivation was less than optimal.
- b. students sometimes had problems with scheduling.
- c. student adjusted well to technical atmosphere.
- d. career exploration experience very beneficial for students.
- e. average or higher students, who are ambitious learn quickly and respond well in medicine..
- f. good experience with programs and hiring students upon graduation.

## SUMMARY

Of the eighty potential employers of a gifted/talented internship program who were surveyed, thirty-five returned the questionnaire for a return rate of 43.8%. Some employers in all twelve job categories of interest to gifted and talented students responded to the survey. Seventeen of the surveys included positive responses to the possibility of employing gifted and talented students. Eighteen of the employers gave a negative response.

Thirty-six positions in twelve job categories were identified as potential work or observation situations for gifted and talented students. Several employers identified a variety of positions within one job category.

Several employers who responded to the survey listed prerequisite skills necessary for employment. Included on the list of skills was ability in math, drafting, science, chemistry, physics, and biology. An interest or career objective in the particular field was listed as well as good writing skills and a command of the English language. Several employers required personal characteristics such as a willingness to undertake a wide variety of tasks and being kind, considerate, and compassionate.

Employers suggested that a gifted and talented internship program be organized on a scheduled basis with at least four hours a week devoted to work or observation. Several employers were interested in suggested salaries and the amount of recordkeeping that would be involved.

Of the thirty-five employers who responded to the survey, thirteen had used a student from a cooperative or work-training program in the past. These employers rated their experience with the programs on a scale of 1-10, with a mean score of 7.5.



## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the acceptance, by potential employers, of a cooperative education program for gifted and talented students in Newport News Public Schools.

#### RESEARCH GOALS

The goals of this study were:

1. To determine the job placements for gifted and talented students that would be available on the Peninsula.
2. To determine the variety of occupational areas that would provide assistance to the program.
3. To determine the job-entry skills that prospective employers would require of a student in the program.

#### DESCRIPTION OF PROCEDURES

To accomplish these goals, a mail survey of eighty potential employers was conducted. The employers were chosen from the membership roster of the Peninsula Chamber of Commerce according to identified job categories of interest to gifted and talented students. These job categories included: (1) Architecture, (2) Business Management, (3) Computer Science, (4) Engineering, (5) Finance, (6) Graphics, (7) Journalism, (8) Legal Research, (9) Marine Biology, (10) Medicine, (11) Research Science, and (12) Television Production.

## SUMMARY

The mail survey and subsequent follow-up letter produced thirty-five responses from potential employers. Seventeen of the employers responded favorably to a work or observation situation for gifted and talented students. In response to the first research goal, the employers, who returned the survey, identified thirty-six potential work or observation situations that would be available to gifted and talented students in the program. Many employers identified numerous types of work stations within one place of employment, thus increasing the number of job opportunities.

Employers in all twelve job categories identified possible work or observation stations, thus accomplishing the second research goal. Employers in six of the twelve job categories responded to the third research goal by listing prerequisite skills that would be necessary for employment. Included in these skills were the following:

1. Ability in math, drafting, science, chemistry, physics, and biology.
2. Interest or career objective in the field.
3. Good writing skills and a command of the English language.
4. Willingness to undertake a wide variety of tasks.
5. Personal qualities; being kind, considerate, and compassionate.

Employers' responses to additional questions on the survey supplied suggestions for the implementation of the program and information pertaining to past experience with cooperative or work-training programs. Respondents suggested that the proposed gifted and talented program be organized on a

scheduled basis with at least four hours a week devoted to work or observation. Employers were also interested in suggested salaries and the amount of recordkeeping that would be involved. Thirteen of the employers who responded had used students in a cooperative or work-training program in the past. A rating of their experience with a program of this type, produced a mean score of 7.5 on a scale of 1-10.

### CONCLUSIONS

The research goals used in this study were developed in order to determine the acceptance, by potential employers, of a gifted and talented cooperative program in Newport News Public Schools. Based on the findings of each of the research goals it was concluded that: A gifted and talented cooperative program would be favorably accepted by a sufficient number of employers on the Peninsula. This conclusion was reached for the following reasons:

1. As stated in the Annual Program Plan for Vocational Education in Newport News (1980, Schedule 6), only fifteen students will be included in the proposed cooperative program each year for a period of three years.

2. Seventeen employers responded favorably to the interest survey and identified a possibility of thirty-six work stations in twelve job categories. These employers could serve as an adequate nucleus for beginning a cooperative program of this type.

3. Of the employers who responded to the survey, thirteen had used students in a similar capacity to the proposed program. When asked to rate their experiences, a generally favorable rating was received.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

When implementing the gifted and talented cooperative program in Newport News, the following recommendations should be considered:

1. As shown in Table 2, page 28 of this study, employers in certain job categories did not respond favorably to the possibility of hiring a gifted and talented student. Limited job placements were listed in the categories of Business Management, Computer Science, Finance, Legal Research, Research Science, and Television Production. However, the survey return rate was extremely low in the categories of Business Management, Computer Science, Finance, and Legal Research. The coordinator of the program should consider the low number of possible placements in these areas.

2. In response to Item 4 on the survey, employers listed prerequisite skills for employment. Many were concerned with a high degree of proficiency in certain advanced subject areas. Therefore, when screening applicants for the program, these skills should be considered.

3. Respondents were also concerned with the operation of the program. The coordinator should make certain that student participation, whether work or observation, be on a regularly scheduled and organized basis.

Recommendations for future research pertaining to this study include the following:

1. The mail survey return rate of 43.8% suggested that additional survey techniques might be used to gain further information. Telephone

contacts or personal interviews would allow for a better understanding of the proposed cooperative program.

2. Potential students for the program should be surveyed or interviewed at least six months before entering the program. An information sheet (Appendix E) and application (Appendix F) could be used for this purpose.

3. Further contacts with potential employers should be made according to the job categories designated by students who will enter the program.

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#### APPENDICES

- A. List of Employers Surveyed
- B. Survey Cover Letter
- C. Interest Survey
- D. Follow-up Letter
- E. Information Sheet for Talented  
and Gifted Internship Program
- F. Student Interest Survey

## APPENDIX A

## EMPLOYERS SURVEYED

Architecture

Coile, Forrest and Associates

Rancorn, Wildman and Krause

Business Management

Abbitt Realty Company

General Business Services

Greater Southeast Development  
Corporation

Newport Distributors

Rouse Enterprises

WWDE/Golden East Broadcasting

Computer Science

Automation Controls, Inc.

Burroughs Corporation

Gately Communications Company

Integrated Services, Inc.

Engineering

Dynamic Engineering

Engineering Incorporated

E. J. Keller

Murray and Dischinger

Newport News Shipbuilding

Peninsula Engineering

Vought Corporation

TV Production

WVEC TV

Finance

Aaron, Roesen and Company

American Finance Corp.

Bache, Halsey, Stuart, Shields,  
Inc.

Bagley Investment Company

Bank of Newport News

Bank of Virginia

Burrus, Paul and Turnbull

Carter and Company

Coopers and Lybrand

First City Bank

First Virginia Bank

Hall, Cotman, Garrison, and  
Roseberry

Legg, Mason, Wood, and Walker

Merril, Lynch, Pierce, Fenner  
and Smith, Inc.

Tanner, Boyd and Company

United Virginia Bank

Virginia National Bank

Wheat First Securities

Journalism and Graphics

The Daily Press

Von Rische, Kidd and Associates

Waters Advertising Agency

Legal Research

William E. Allaun, Jr.

Harry Atkinson

Ronald E. Bensten

Duff and Peet, P.C.

W. Glover Garner, Jr.

Glascock and Martin, P.C.

Hornsby and Hornsby

Jones, Blechman, Woltz and  
Kelly

William Krieger

The Legal Clinic of Tonita  
FosterMarshall, Blalock, Garner, and  
Millner

Patten and Wornom

Watkins, Chase, Latchum,  
Williams, and Lerner

Wentworth and Buxton

Marine BiologyGulf Radiotelephone and  
Electronics, Inc.

Marine Resources Commission

Virginia Institute of Marine  
ScienceMedicine

Cyrus Brown, M.D.

Alvin Bryant, M.D., P.C.

Dr. F. A. Carmines

Dr. Lawrence S. Cowling

Norman R. Edwards, M.D.

ENT Physicians and Surgeons, Inc.

Eye Physicians and Surgeons

S. Galeski Optical Co.

Marvin Kaplan, D.D.S., P.C.

Drs. Koun and Wild

Mary Immaculate Hospital

Riverside Hospital

Whitaker Memorial Hospital

Research Science

Advex Corporation

Boeing Company

General Dynamics Corp.

Martin Marietta Aerospace

McDonnell Douglas Corp.

NASA

Northrop Corp.

James R. Reed

Wyle Laboratories

## APPENDIX B



## Newport News Public Schools

12465 WARWICK BOULEVARD • BOX 6130 • NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23606 • 804-599-4411

May 14, 1980

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Selected Community Employers

FROM: Deborah S. Buchanan, Teacher-Coordinator  
Ettalea E. Kanter, Instructional Supervisor

SUBJECT: INTEREST SURVEY

You have been recommended as a potential employer in a special program which we are planning to offer to gifted and talented students in the Newport News Public Schools. I would appreciate your cooperation in the project by answering the enclosed interest survey and returning it by May 23, 1980.

The program we are designing will be limited to students "who have been identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These students require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided in order to realize their contribution to self and society."

The internship program we are planning to offer will require the selected students to complete 250 clock hours of work experience per year on a job that relates to their career interests. The students' interests and occupational choices will determine methods of instruction in the classroom and job placements.

We certainly appreciate the support that we have always enjoyed with the business community and are looking forward to offering this new program. We, therefore, need your honest and frank appraisal of the need and acceptance of this program by completion of the attached survey. If you would prefer to have someone else in your firm complete the form, please feel free to provide him/her with the survey. After the results have been tabulated, we will contact you concerning your participation in this program.

Enclosures

## APPENDIX C

## NEWPORT NEWS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Newport News, Virginia

## INTEREST SURVEY

The Newport News Public School System is planning to offer a gifted and talented internship program in the Fall of 1980. Students with unique talents and abilities who are enrolled in the program will be able to investigate their career interests through paid work experience with employers on the Peninsula.

The purpose of this survey is to determine the acceptance, by potential employers, of a program of this type. Your cooperation in completing and returning this form by May 23, 1980, would be greatly appreciated.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

- 
1. Would you consider hiring a gifted/talented student enrolled in the internship program to work for your company?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no

2. If no, would you consider allowing a gifted/talented student to observe an executive in your company on a scheduled basis?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no

3. Please check the category(ies) in which employment would be available in your company for this type of student.

\_\_\_\_\_Architecture  
\_\_\_\_\_Business Management  
\_\_\_\_\_Computer Science  
\_\_\_\_\_Engineering  
\_\_\_\_\_Finance  
\_\_\_\_\_Graphics

\_\_\_\_\_Journalism  
\_\_\_\_\_Legal Research  
\_\_\_\_\_Marine Biology  
\_\_\_\_\_Medicine  
\_\_\_\_\_Research Science  
\_\_\_\_\_Television Production



4. Please list any prerequisite skills that you would require of a student intern participating in this program and employed by your company.

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5. Please add any comments or suggestions concerning the implementation of the Gifted/Talented Internship Program.

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6. Have you used any students from a cooperative or work-training program in the past?

\_\_\_\_\_yes

\_\_\_\_\_no

On a scale of 1-10, with a 10 being the best, please rate your experience by choosing the one number that you feel indicates your success with the program.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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Please explain your reasons for your rating:

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## APPENDIX D



## Newport News Public Schools

12465 WARWICK BOULEVARD • BOX 6130 • NEWPORT NEWS, VIRGINIA 23606 • 804-599-4411

May 28, 1980

### MEMORANDUM

TO: Selected Community Employers

FROM: Deborah S. Buchanan, Teacher-Coordinator  
Ettalea E. Kanter, Instructional Supervisor

SUBJECT: INTEREST SURVEY, GIFTED AND TALENTED INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

On May 14, 1980, an interest survey was sent to your company requesting information that would aid in the planning of a gifted and talented internship program in the Newport News Public Schools. We realize that spring is a hectic season and that you are probably very busy. However, we do need your valuable opinions to facilitate the implementation of this program. Enclosed is an additional survey form; please take a few minutes to complete and return it in the envelope provided. We truly appreciate your help with this project.

Enclosures

## APPENDIX E



## WHAT IT IS

The Talented And Gifted (TAG) Internship Program is for eleventh and twelfth grade students who have exceptional ability in creative and/or productive thinking; who have demonstrated some degree of accomplishment in a specific area; and who want to apply their skills and training to practical, world-of-work situations.

## HOW IT OPERATES

Students work at least 250 hours in a supervised, school-approved job that is related to their career interests. Students also meet in a regularly scheduled class which coordinates work experiences with classroom activities to further develop job competencies.

## WHAT'S IN IT FOR YOU

Participating in the TAG Internship Program will help you

- become aware of available career opportunities
- develop personal traits for work success
- learn skills for a future full-time career
- gain supervised work experience
- discover career options suited to your particular interests and abilities

## WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

Participants must be enrolled in Point Option; meet the qualifications for talented and gifted students; and be approved by a school counselor, the Point Option director and the TAG Internship Program coordinator.

## INTERESTED?

Complete the application form and return it to your school counselor.

## APPENDIX F



TAG Internship Program  
Newport News Public Schools  
Newport News, Virginia

**APPLICATION**

PLEASE PRINT IN INK OR TYPE

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone No. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security No. \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_

Name of School Counselor \_\_\_\_\_

Full Name of Parent or Guardian \_\_\_\_\_

Grade in school during 1980-81 school year: \_\_\_\_\_ 11 \_\_\_\_\_ 12

Check the field(s) in which you are interested:

<input type="checkbox"/> Architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> Legal Research
<input type="checkbox"/> Business Management	<input type="checkbox"/> Marine Biology
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer Science	<input type="checkbox"/> Medicine
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> Research Science
<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> Television Production
<input type="checkbox"/> Graphics	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (list) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Journalism	_____

Are you currently employed? \_\_\_\_\_ If yes, where are you employed?

Please indicate a first and second choice for job placement if approved for the Talented and Gifted Internship Program.

1st \_\_\_\_\_ 2nd \_\_\_\_\_

When would you prefer to start working? \_\_\_\_\_ Summer \_\_\_\_\_ Fall

Will you have transportation to work? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

Participation in this program requires regular attendance, willingness to accept job and classroom responsibilities, and completion of all assigned duties and reports correctly and punctually. If accepted for the program, I am prepared to meet these obligations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Applicant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date